

## *From the District Director's Desk Gains Posted in 3rd Qtr.*

By Francisco "Pancho" A. Marrero

SBA loan guaranty activity in South Florida continued upward in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter despite continued competition from the SBA disaster loan program. Almost 182,000 applications for disaster assistance were received for the four devastating hurricanes that hit Florida in 2004 with almost 54,000 of them approved for over \$1.8 billion.

Despite these staggering statistics, the good news is that volume in the 504 loan program is up 11.5% and up 35% in dollars over this time last year in South Florida. In addition, the 7(a) loan guaranty program, volume is up 1% while the dollar amount is up 27%. The average 7(a) loan size increased from \$124,000 to \$155,000.



We are taking a proactive stance to shore up the 7(a) volume by aggressively marketing our

Community Express Loan product to our small business customers. No longer a 7(a) pilot program, Community Express offers borrowers \$5,000-\$25,000 loans with terms as long as 10 years. Innovative Bank and Business Loan Express (BLX) are the lenders for Community

...Continued on Page 3



Robert Chavarria, Marketing Manager, Service Area 3 at The City of St. Petersburg's Business Assistance Center (SPBAC) Open House. See article on page 7.

## **Online Training Network Makes Training Available 24/7**

By **Ilene P. Rubio**  
Marketing Manager, Area 1

In its efforts to provide information on its programs and services to the small business community of South Florida, the SBA South Florida District Office (SFDO) rolled out its "Online Training Network" program in late January 2005.

The Online Training Network is a virtual campus housing free training courses and knowledge resources, an expansion of electronic government, and an initiative designed to help small businesses successfully compete.

The Training Network makes SBA's business management resources available anytime and anywhere. It is a dynamic learning center designed to help small businesses compete in a constantly changing, global environment. It is most importantly, however, a balanced approach between distance training and the traditional, face-to-face technical assistance offered by the agency. The SBA Online Training Network includes both WEB-LIVE and WEB-ARCHIVED courses on a variety of informational topics.

...Continued on Page 6



## MANAGEMENT PROFILE

**Barry P. Meltz**

**Florida Commercial Market Representative  
SBA Office of Government Contracting, Area III**

His role is to help create an environment in South Florida that allows for maximum participation by all small businesses in federal government contract awards and large prime Federal contractor's subcontract awards. To accomplish his goals, he works with both the State's large prime contractors and federal procurement activities to achieve or exceed their small business goals in both prime and sub-contracting areas.

His office also offers training and counseling on all issues concerning federal procurement to small businesses looking to work as a prime contractors or as sub-contractors to large federal prime contractors.

Throughout his 30-year federal career Barry has worked in Administrative management and in

the Procurement/Contracting arena. He was formerly the SBA's Deputy Associate Administrator in the Office of Government Contracting in Washington, D.C. and, has previously held positions with the U.S. Department of the Navy, the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Upon leaving the Department of the Navy in 1993, he received the Navy's Meritorious Civilian Service Award and was awarded the designation of an "Honorary Supply Corps Officer." In addition to having participated in the Federal Executive Institute's "Leadership for a Democratic Society" training, Barry is also a graduate of Temple University in Philadelphia. He enjoys weight training and physical conditioning.

A member of the Office of Government Contracting for Area III, **Barry P. Meltz** is the U.S. Small Business Administration's Commercial Market Representative for the State of Florida. Working out of the SBA's South Florida District Office in Miami, Barry is also the Procurement Center Representative for Federal contracting activities from Palm Beach County south to Key West.

## District Office Bids Fond Farewell

### *Three Staffers Retire with Nearly 100 Years Combined Experience*

**By Althea A. Harris**  
Public Affairs Officer

The South Florida District recently said farewell to three of its employees whose combined federal experience totaled nearly 100 years! An industrial engineer by education, **John "Jack" J. Geis** joined the SBA in 1973 and served in the South Florida district office for the next 30 years. He retired from his position as the Assistant District Director for 8(a) Business Development.

Jack's colleague in the 8(a)/BD Division, **Juan R. Matos** retired from his role as a Business Opportunity Specialist with 31 years of federal service. One colleague commented



*John "Jack" Geis, Dawn D. Hill,  
Juan R. Matos*

that "Juan's dedication, professionalism, and integrity motivated me...."

From the Marketing & Outreach Division, the office lost **Dawn D. Hill** who gave SBA 17 years of service after she worked for 16

years at the Veterans Administration. She spent the bulk of her years at SBA and VA as a Servicing and Liquidation Specialist. Through SBA's Transformation efforts she had the opportunity to do marketing where she said, "I had the most fun." Having been bitten by the entrepreneurial bug, she plans to someday open her own Internet-based business in Roanoke, Virginia where she'll spend her days.

At their retirement celebrations, Deputy District Director Gilbert Colón remarked on behalf of the staff, "Because you are happy, we are happy for you. We wish you more love, happiness, and joy than you can stand." Farewell, friends!

# 3rd Quarter Gains for Small Businesses

from the DD's Desk, from page 1

Express in the South Florida market. We are in the process of finalizing the list of technical assistance providers who will assist borrowers with the loan application and provide business advice geared to ensure their success. (see story on page 4)

Our achievements this year continue to indicate a desire and need for our products and services and demonstrate they have value to our customers. With the continued good work of our lenders and Resource Partners, I am confident we will again achieve record-breaking results this fiscal year.

Other good news in the District is the Grand Opening of the new Alternate Work Site in Ft. Pierce on August 16<sup>th</sup> (see story on page 6). This next step is crucial to SBA's Transformation goals of being market-driven and customer-focused. I hope you can join us for the Grand Opening Celebration.

## FY 2005 Top SBA Lenders

Loan Activity as of June 30, 2005\*

**3,097 7(a) Loan Guaranties Approved, \$590.6 Million**

1	Bank of America N.A.	1,440	\$53.4
2	Capital One Federal Savings Bank	262	\$13.0
3	CIT Small Business Lending Corp.	104	\$46.0
4	Wachovia SBA Lending, Inc.	102	\$58.0
5	HSBC Bank USA N.A.	79	\$6.1
6	California Bank and Trust (Zions)	75	\$13.3
7	Business Loan Center, LLC.	74	\$24.9
8	Suntrust Bank	64	\$4.6
9	Banco Popular	63	\$12.4
10	Comerica Bank	32	\$19.7

**83 504-CDC Loan Guaranties Approved, \$36.8 Million**

1	Florida Business Development Corp.	178	\$71.6
2	Florida 1 <sup>st</sup> Finance Capital Corp.	119	\$61.7
3	Gulf Coast Business Finance, Inc.	25	\$15.3
4	Southwest Florida Regional Dev.	15	\$9.1
5	Tampa Bay Economic Dev. Corp.	8	\$2.2

**\* Get detailed statistical loan data and other valuable information about our District Office territory in the Market Profile by clicking on "Local Resources" at: [www.sba.gov/fl/south](http://www.sba.gov/fl/south)**

## Farewell to Billie Anderson

**By Ilene P. Rubio**  
Marketing Manager, Area 1

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, Billie S. Anderson, Business Development Specialist of the SBA South Florida District Office's (SFDO's) Business Development Division – Marketing Area 1, said goodbye to South Florida. Billie transferred to the Michigan District Office and is reporting there effective July 5, 2005.

With over 16 years of federal government service, Billie held several positions within the SFDO in the Administration Division's Information



Processing Center, as File Room Clerk, and the District Office's Cashier. She worked in the Portfolio Management Division (PMD) as a Loan Servicing Assistant and Economic Development Specialist liquidating SBA loans and

processing Guarantee Purchases. She also served as an Economic Development Assistant in the Marketing & Outreach Division supporting all marketing & outreach functions.

Prior to joining the SBA, Billie worked for the U. S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a Taxpayer Service Representative responsible for such areas as Tele-Tax, Federal Identification Numbers, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and other areas.

Billie was born in Hazlehurst, Mississippi and grew up in Michigan. She graduated from Grand Rapids South High School. She attended the Davenport School of Business, presently known as Davenport University, and Grand Rapids Junior College, the Grand Rapids OIC. She is married to Charles L. Anderson and they have eight children and one grandson.

We wish Billie the best of luck in her new position in Michigan!



# SBA & IRS Join Forces to Help Small Businesses

By Maurice P. Brazier  
Marketing Manager, Area 2

The U.S. Small Business Administration's South Florida District Office and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service's Office of Taxpayer Education, located in Miami, have joined forces and plan to conduct joint workshops for small businesses in South Florida. The partnership will help planned businesses with such things as choosing the appropriate organizational structure, Employer Identification Number, and basic tax aspects of running a small business. Existing and Planned Businesses will get information on Recordkeeping, Accounting Methods, Business Returns, and Business Deductions and Credits.

Joint workshops are planned for locations in Palm Beach, St. Lucie, and Brevard Counties. According to the South Florida District Office's Deputy District Director, Gilbert Colón, stated, "The joint effort between the SBA and IRS will benefit the small business community by providing them with information that is critical their good standing and viability."

The joint effort between SBA and IRS will emphasize greater coordination, outreach and the leveraging of existing services. The partnership will work to encourage community-based collaboration to educate small businesses.



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## CommunityExpress is Back!

By **Jonel Hein**

Marketing & Outreach Specialist

The South Florida District Office is gearing up to re-launch the Community Express loan guaranty program in South Florida. Developed as a pilot SBA loan program in collaboration with the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) and its member organizations, the Community Express program was initially rolled-out in 1999 with only a handful of select lenders.

This program is offered in pre-designated geographic areas serving mostly Low and Moderate Income entrepreneurs and New Markets small businesses. Community Express offers qualified small business borrowers up to \$25,000 for their working capital needs. It requires technical and management assistance be given to borrowers in an effort to help increase the chances of success.

In South Florida, this program was hindered by the limited number of available technical assistance (TA) providers. To overcome this stumbling block, the South Florida SBA Capital Access team, in conjunction with the Marketing & Outreach staff, engaged in an aggressive recruitment effort. Recently, nearly 50 interested potential new TA providers received training on Community Express from District staff either in person or on-line. These organizations will provide the pre- and post-loan technical assistance to small business borrowers, a mandatory component of the Community Express loan guaranty program.

In addition, the District will host upcoming events that will allow lenders and TA providers to come together, in a training forum, to meet each other and network. At these events SBA staff will present information on the Community Express program to the potential TA providers and hopefully show the benefits of the program to the lenders, and small business borrowers alike. More information will be coming your way soon regarding these events.

If you know of a non-profit organization that is providing technical assistance to small business owners in the South Florida area, please contact John Dunn, Assistant District Director for Economic Development, with the organization's contact information. John can be reached at (305)536-5521 ext. 140 or by email at [john.dunn@sba.gov](mailto:john.dunn@sba.gov).

# PRIMER: SBA's Export Express

By Mary Hernandez

Regional Manager, SBA Int'l Trade Programs

SBA ExportExpress combines the SBA's lending and technical assistance programs to help small businesses that have traditionally had difficulty obtaining adequate export financing. Applicants must have been in business for at least one year-- although not necessarily involved in exporting-- and demonstrate they will be entering a new foreign market or expanding into an existing foreign market.

Loan proceeds may be used to finance export development activities like:

- Participation in a foreign trade show
- Language translation of product brochures or catalogs for use in overseas markets
- General lines of credit for export purposes
- Service contracts from buyers located outside the United States
- Transaction-specific financing associated with completing actual export orders
- Expenses related to the development of foreign markets by the borrower, including export trading and management companies
- Acquire, construct, renovate, modernize, improve, or expand production facilities or equipment to be used in the U.S. in the production of goods or services for export

## How the Program Works

Any lender authorized to participate in the SBA Express loan program may participate in Export Express, use the streamlined and expedited loan review and approval procedures to process SBA-guaranteed loans, and typically receive a response from SBA within 36 hours. The lender uses its own loan analyses, procedures, and documentation. Completed loan applications are submitted for approval to the SBA's processing center in Sacramento, California.

## The Value of the SBA Guarantee

The SBA loan guarantee encourages lenders to make loans to small business exporters they might

not make on their own. The SBA Export Express guarantee is 85 percent for loans up to \$150,000 and 75 percent for loans more than \$150,000, up to the maximum loan amount of \$250,000.

## Terms, Interest Rates, and Fees

Interest rates are negotiated between the borrower and the lender. Rates can either be fixed or variable and are tied to the prime rate as published in *The Wall Street Journal*. Lenders may charge up to 6.5 percent over prime rate for loans of \$50,000 or less and up to 4.5 percent over the prime rate for loans over \$50,000.

Like most 7(a) loans, the maturity of an Export Express term loan is usually 5 to 10 years for working capital, 10 to 15 years for machinery and equipment (not to exceed the useful life of the equipment), and up to 25 years for real estate. The maturity for revolving lines of credit may not exceed 5 years.

The same guarantee and servicing fees assessed on regular SBA 7(a) loans are applicable to ExportExpress loans.

## Technical Assistance

As many small business exporters face unique problems and challenges, the SBA Export Express program also includes technical assistance on various business topics such as marketing, management, and planning. This assistance is available through SBA's U.S. Export Assistance Centers in cooperation with the SBA's network of resource partners-- Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and SCORE--*Counselors to America's Small Business*.

On approval of an SBA Export Express loan, a U.S. Export Assistance Center representative will contact the borrower to offer appropriate assistance. This assistance may include training offered through the SBA's Export Trade Assistance Partnership, SBDC International Trade Center, SCORE, District Export Council, or Export Legal Assistance Network.

## What about Other Export Financing Needs?

The SBA offers a range of long- and short-term financing options for small business exporters, including the Export Working Capital Program (EWCP) and International Trade loans. For more information about SBA's export assistance programs, see [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) or contact Mary Hernandez at: [mary.hernandez@sba.gov](mailto:mary.hernandez@sba.gov).

# New Field Office Set to Open in Ft. Pierce

## SBA Transformation Effort Continues

By Maurice P. Brazier  
Marketing Manager, Area 2

On August 16, 2005, the SBA's South Florida will celebrate the Grand Opening of a new SBA Field Office in Ft. Pierce, Florida. "The opening of the new field office signifies SBA's commitment to reach all areas in every District Office," said South Florida District Director, Francisco "Pancho" Marrero.

The Ft. Pierce Office will cover Service Area 2: St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Indian River, Brevard, Osceola, Okeechobee, Highlands, and Glades Counties.

The South Florida District Office, North Carolina District Office,

and Arizona District Office were chosen to serve as pilot offices under the SBA's Transformation Initiative. One of the key features of the Transformation Initiative in South Florida was the establishment of three marketing & outreach service areas.

The purpose of the service areas is to provide comprehensive services to entrepreneurs, small business clients, resource partners and participating lenders, and to be customer-centered.

Maurice Brazier, Senior Area Manager, will manage the day-to-day operations of the Field Office, and will have a staff consisting of two Business Development Specialist and an Administrative Support Specialist.

According to Brazier, there are plans in the works to bring small business clinics and workshops to the area, many of them in Ft. Pierce. Brazier also stated that "while it is impossible for SBA staff to physically be in all areas at all times, SBA offers the next best thing.

Additionally, anyone with Internet access can participate in SBA's online training 24 hours a day, 7 days a week." The South Florida District Office posts its archived online training at <http://www.sba.gov/fl/south/trainingarchive.html> and live in-person training at <http://app1.sba.gov/calendar/states/calendar.cfm?op=group&grp=20>.

## SBA Internet Courses Available 24 / 7

Continued from Page 1

WEB LIVE courses are training courses presented in-person by an SBA SFDO employee and delivered at a specific time and date via both the Internet and telephone simultaneously.

Several divisions in the SFDO have provided WEB-LIVE courses. For example, the Lender Relations Division has been successful in training SBA lenders across South Florida with its WEB-LIVE course offerings which include Overview of SBA Loan Programs, Credit Analysis, How to Package an SBA Loan, 504 Loan Program, Liquidation and Servicing, CAPLINE Loan

Program, E-TRAN (Electronic Transmission of SBA guaranty loans), SBA Express Loan Program, Export Loan Programs, and Low-Doc Loan Program. The sessions vary from 30 minutes to 1 hour, with the ability to chat live with the SBA employee providing the course.

The Online Training Network also provides WEB-ARCHIVED courses. These are pre-recorded training courses in an electronic file format which can be downloaded at any time via the Internet. Current courses offered include: 1) Starting a Business and Utilizing SBA Resource Partners; 2) How to Develop a Business Plan; 3) SBA Disaster Loan Programs; 4)

Facts on Consumer Credit; and 5) How to prevent your Business from Failing.

In the near future, additional WEB-ARCHIVED courses will be offered. Future courses include: Marketing Tips for Small Businesses, SBA Loan Programs for Small Businesses, How to Sell for Bigger Profits and Spanish versions of Starting a Business & Utilizing SBA Resource Partners, and How to Develop a Business Plan.

To access the web archived courses, visit our web site at:

<http://www.sba.gov/fl/south/trainingarchive.html>.

. . .Continued on Page 7



# Spotlight on Service Area 3

## St. Petersburg Small Business Week Celebration & Open House

By Robert Chavarria  
Marketing Manager, Service Area 3

In celebration of National Small Business Week, the City of St. Petersburg's Business Assistance Center (SPBAC) held a tropical-themed Open House on Wednesday April 27, 2005. St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker, Deputy Mayor Goliath Davis, and members of the City Council offered remarks commenting on the importance of small business contributions to the City's economic vitality.

Each year, the President of the United States designates one week as National Small Business Week and it is the time when the SBA recognizes the contributions of small businesses to our Nation's economy. Since 2002, the SPBAC has provided services to more than 10,000 new, existing, and potential business owners and has made more than 10,000 customer contacts at the Center since relocating to its current facilities in June of 2004.

The Center's tropical atmosphere featured displays exhibiting many of the services

offered by entrepreneurs and existing small business owners.

The U.S. Small Business Administration South Florida District operated a display that was manned by Robert Chavarria and Lynn Williams of the Service Area 3 Marketing and Outreach Division. Also offering counseling and assistance were SBA's national and local partners that provide services at the SPBAC: University of South Florida-Small Business Development Center; Pinellas County SCORE Chapter 115; Gulf Coast Business Finance, Inc.; and, the Tampa Bay Black Business Investment Corporation. In addition, vital in-house City programs

included the City of St. Petersburg Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program and the Weed and Seed Program.

The SPBAC showcased many assistance other local programs and small businesses that received assistance at the Center. A favorite business display featured Day Dreams, a successful small business assisted by the SPBAC that provides chocolate fountains and a variety of dipping items for those special memorable events.

The Center is located at 33 Sixth Street South, Suite 301, St. Petersburg, FL. Information about the City of St. Petersburg Business Assistance Center services can be obtained at (727) 893-7146 or at [www.stpete.org](http://www.stpete.org).



*SBA's Robert Chavarria & St. Petersburg Deputy Mayor Goliath Davis*

## Internet Courses, 24/7

Continued from Page 6

Once you access the web site, you will see a registration screen which requests your name, e-mail address, phone number, and company name. Once you complete the information, simply hit *Register*, and you will be connected to the course. Minimum requirements to access the WEB-ARCHIVED (pre-recorded) courses include:

1) Computer with Internet connection; 2) Speakers in the "On" position; 3) Ability

to download multimedia files; and 4) Ensuring your computer has Java Software and is Java-enabled.

As of June 30, 2005, over 500 persons have accessed the SBA's WEB-LIVE and WEB-ARCHIVED online training courses. Feedback received from course participants includes "*this is a great idea for people with busy schedules,*" and "*Another A+ for the SBA South Florida District Office.*"

The advantages of the SBA's Online Training Course

Network include: 1) Training available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; 2) Ability to participate in the courses from the comfort of your home or office; and 3) the process is simple.

Traditional training opportunities offered by SBA and its resource partners around South Florida can be found by clicking on the Training Calendar for South Florida. Simply visit the SBA South Florida District Office web site at [www.sba.gov/fl/south](http://www.sba.gov/fl/south) and click on Training Calendar.